

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT:

This report pertains to an investigation of the identification of the burial location of a member of the Commonwealth Forces, during the Great War 1914-1921.

SUBMITTED TO:

CWGC Commemorations Section
Commonwealth War Graves Commission
2 Marlow Road
Maidenhead, Berkshire
SL6 7DX United Kingdom
Email: commemorations@cwgc.org

Report Date: 11 November 2017

Reason for Submission: ("X" means purpose of the report)

Casualty Identification:		Burial Information:	
Confirmed Identity	X	Burial Location Identified	X
Most Probable Identity		Grave Stone Correction	
Questionable Identity		Grave Records Correction	
Incorrect Identity		Request for CWGC Details	
Other		Other	

Supporting Documents: (# refers to attachment number; "I" information provided)

Casualty Identification:		Burial Information:	
Cole, Ernest Lockett	i	Ovillers Military Cemetery	link
8 th Northamptonshire (att. 1 st)	i	Somme, France	i
2 nd Lieutenant	i	Plot 11 Row Z Grave 1	i
Date of Death 27/09/1916	link	Date of Burial 8/2/1921	i
Graves Registration Report	1	War Diary Information	6, 7
Concentration of Grave	2	Historical Reference	8
Exhumation Report		Grave Stone Photograph	
Headstone Register		Grave Stone Inscription	
Area Map(s)	3	Memorial Inscription/Photo	
Trench Map(s)	4	Reporting and Review	9
Possible Candidates List	5	Other	

Summary of Findings:

The Graves Registration Report form for Plot 11 Row Z Grave 1 lists an Unknown 2nd Lieutenant of the Northamptonshire Regiment (*Northants*). The Concentration of Graves Return further notes that he had one star, a badge and underclothing marked with the initials "E.C". Ernest Lockett Cole is the only 2nd Lieutenant of the Northamptonshire Regiment with a first initial "E" lost in the Great War.

2nd Lt. Cole was in the immediate area of **57c.M.29.b.7.3** where the remains were found and has no known grave, thus listed on the Thiepval Memorial. The regiment, battalion, location and initials are compelling evidence that these are the remains of 2nd Lt. Cole.

Details of Findings:

The findings are conclusive that the remains in Plot 11 Row Z Grave 1 are those of [2nd Lieutenant Ernest Lockett Cole](#), 8th Battalion (attached 1st Battalion), Northamptonshire Regiment (*"Northants"*).

The findings are based on the following:

1. The Graves Registration Report (GRRF) for the Ovillers Military Cemetery lists an Unknown 2/Lieut of the Northamptonshire Regiment, buried in Plot 11 Row Z Grave 1 (**Attachment #1**).
2. The Concentration of Graves Exhumations and Reburials Burial Return (COG-BR) shows that nine (9) men were found buried in one shell hole located at **57c.M.29.b.7.5 (Attachment #2)**. The document further states that the remains that were concentrated into Grave 1 were of an unknown 2/Lieut of the Northants Regiment, with the initials "E.C" on underclothing. The means of identification was noted as 1 Star (2nd Lieutenant), badge (Northamptonshire Regiment) and clothing (initials "E.C"). Found with the 2nd Lieutenant was another soldier of the Northants, one soldier of the 19/Londons and one soldier of the 4/Buffs.
3. An area map of the western front shows that the remains were found in the area between Martinpuich and Gueudecourt, just south of the Eaucourt l'Abbaye (**Attachment #3**). In September-October 1916, this was an active area for the Commonwealth Forces during the Battle of the Somme (Flers-Courcelette).
4. A more detailed trench map of the area where the remains were located illustrates that the 2nd Lieutenant was recovered east of Support Trench and west of Goose Alley (**Attachment #4**). After reading text narratives of the action on 27 September 1916; it can be seen that this area is north of Drop Alley that originates at the "Cough Drop" at the eastern terminus of Prue Trench.
5. The most critical piece of evidence to identify this 2nd Lieutenant of the Northamptonshire Regiment is the initials on the underclothing. An analysis of the CWGC database for unknown 2nd Lieutenants of all units of the Northamptonshire Regiment revealed there were 30 candidates (**Attachment #5**). This list includes not only the men lost in the fall of 1916, but all from March 1915 through to October 1918, on seven (7) different memorials. There is only one (1) person on this list with the initials "E.C.", that being Ernest Cole. Although there is one other candidate with the surname initial "C", his first initial is "W".

There are no other candidates that that the forename initial "E". To ensure that all possibilities were considered, we checked to make sure there were no Lieutenants with the initials "E.C". We also checked all name variations such as "E" for Edward being reported as a "Ted". Those checks were completed irrespective of the country of burial or location of the memorial.

6. The war diary of the 1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment notes that on 26 September 1916 the unit is in a Reserve Position south of High Wood (**Attachment #6**). All available men were digging out DROP, STARFISH and CORK Alleys. On the 27th, "A" Coy was working on the trenches, while "B" and "C" Coys moved up to the Flers line and are placed at the disposal of the 2/K.R.R. (*King's Royal Rifles*), where the "C" Coy bombers of the Northants making a bombing attack. The war diary specifically reports:

"There was no effective artillery preparation; the German trenches were strongly defended; the attack was unsuccessful. 2/Lt E. Cole killed, 2/Lt R. W. Gates wounded, about 30 O.R. killed and wounded".

7. A cross reference for the position of 2nd Lieutenant Cole's unit can be found in the War Diary of the 2nd Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps as the Northamptonshire's were attached to that unit on 25 September 1916 (**Attachment #7**). On that date they moved to the newly taken trenches at Eaucourt l'Abbaye (see *item 3 above*). It was here that the first of three (3) bombing attacks would be launched (see *item 6 above*). On the 25th, 26th and 27th. The unit lost 25 men during those attacks, 22 of which are on the Thiepval Memorial. The actions of the K.R.R., to which the Northants were serving, allow for the placement of Lt. Cole directly in the area where the remains were recovered.
8. The historical references for the action (Somme: The Battle of Morval) also confirm that the British Army was active in this specific area at that time (**Attachment #8**). The ORBAT (Order of Battle) shows the 1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment was in the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, III Corps (Pultney), and 4th Army (Rawlinson). A period sketch of the area names all the locations in the text (*also highlighted in red text*), including: The Star Fish, The Cough Drop, Drop Alley and Goose Alley. All of these are on the approach to the Eaucourt l'Abbaye, the direction in which the patrols were reported to be heading.

On 25 September 1916 (page 382) III Corps were ordered to gain as much ground as possible by pushing patrols forward west of the Factory Corner – Ligny Road, preparatory to carrying out their advance northward on both sides of Eaucourt l'Abbaye. This would place Lt. Cole directly in the area where the remains were later recovered.

Action Required:

The “Investigative Report” has been prepared in accordance with the procedures and criteria set out by the CWGC, should they wish to make any changes to the commemoration details (***Attachment #9***).

The facts are clear that 2nd Lieutenant Ernest Lockett Cole was in the precise area where the remains were found, he has no known grave and is the only unknown 2nd Lieutenant in the Northamptonshire Regiment to bear the initials “E.C”. He is also the only 2/Lt. of the Northamptonshire Regiment that was lost in the Great War having the first initial “E”.

ATTACHMENT #1

Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Graves Registration Report Form.

<http://archive.cloud.cwgc.org/archive/doc/doc2457926.JPG>

COPY

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT. Army Form W. 3372.

GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.

COMMUNE: Ovillers-la-Boisselle

REPORT No. 11 SCHEDULE No. 208c. REV.

M.L.

PLACE OF BURIAL OVILLERS ~~BRITISH~~ CEMETERY

Map Reference 57d.X.7.d.9.5.

The following are buried here:—

Regiment	No.	Name	Rank and Initials	Date of Death	Cross Erected or G. R. U'd.	Plot, Row and Grave
<u>PLOT 11 ROW "Z"</u>						
Northamptonshires		UNKNOWN	2/Lieut.		ALL	1
Bufs.		UNKNOWN				2
19/Londons		-do-			CROSSES	3
4/Bufs		-do-				4
Northamptonshires		-do-				5
19/Londons		-do-			ERECTED	6
		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER				7
		-do-				8
		-do-				9
xxxxxxx Dorsets.		UNKNOWN				10

ENTERED
SLIP CHECKED

28.1.24
AG 1.2.24

(6 31 5) W2709—P3733 15,000 12/20 HWV(P646) Forms/W3372/4

ATTACHMENT #2

Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Concentration of Graves (Exhumations and Reburials) Burial Return. <http://archive.cloud.cwgc.org/archive/doc/doc2458747.JPG>

CONCENTRATION OF GRAVES (Exhumation and Reburials)

BURIAL RETURN.

Serial No. 300. 8/2/21.

OVILLERS BRITISH CEMETERY. 57d.X.Y.d.S.S.

Name of Cemetery of Reburial

DANGER AREA. No. 3 AREA.

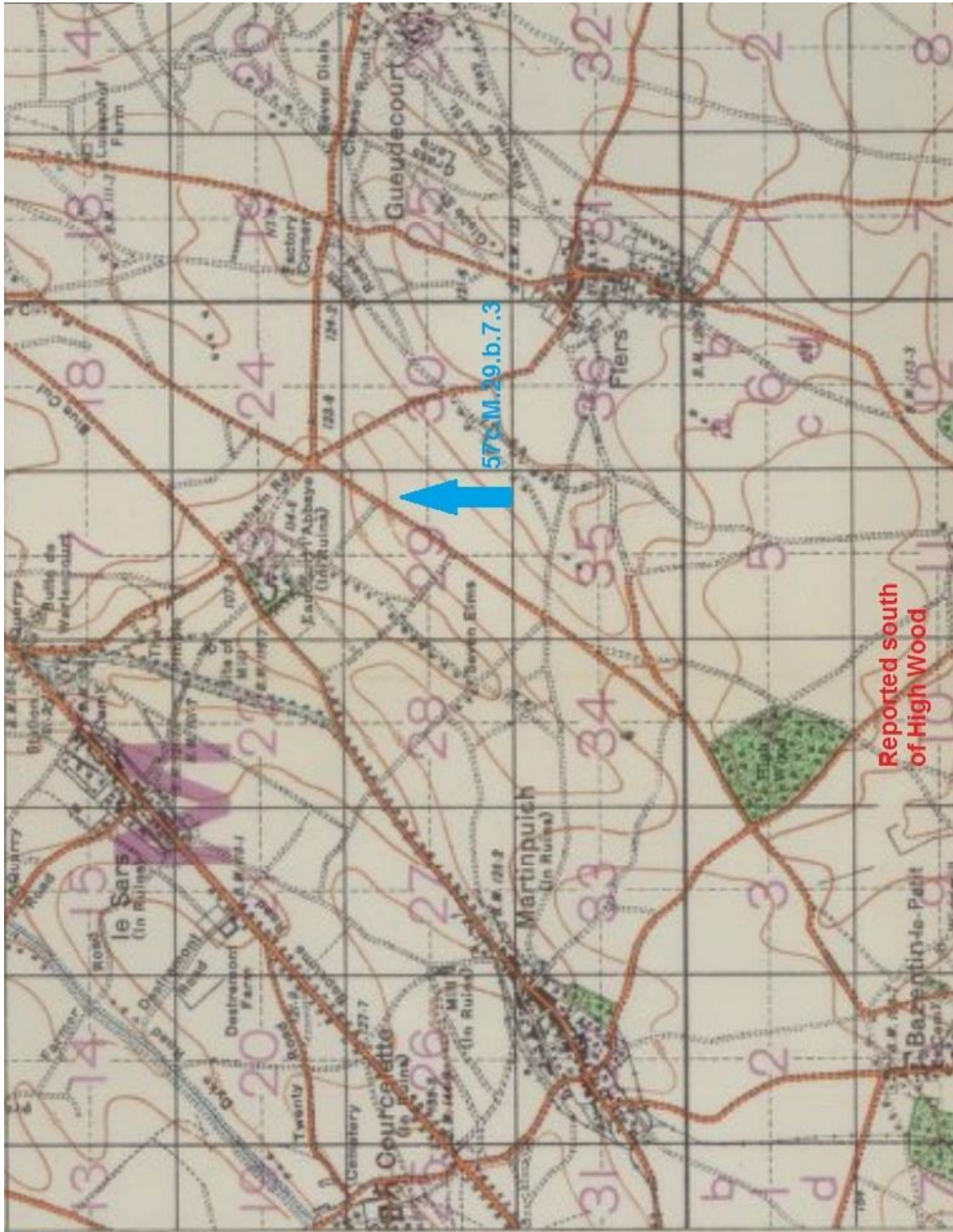
Plot	Row	Grave	Map Reference where body found	Was cross on grave?	Regimental particulars	Means of Identification	Were any effects forwarded to Base?
11	Z	1		No.	UNKNOWN 2/LIEUT. Northants Regt. Initials "H.C." on underclothing.	One star, Badge and clothing.	No.
		2	57c.H.28.b.7.3.	No.	UNKNOWN SOLDIER: "THE BUFFS".	Cap badge.	No.
		3	ALL BURIED	No.	UNKNOWN 19/LONDON.	-do-	No.
		4	TOGETHER	No.	UNKNOWN 4/BUFFS.	Numerals.	No.
		5	IN ONE	No.	UNKNOWN SOLDIER, Northants Regt.	-do-	No.
		6	SHELL	No.	UNKNOWN 19/LONDON.	-do-	No.
		7	HOLE.	No.	UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER.	Clothing.	No.
		8		No.	-do-	-do-	No.
		9		No.	-do-	-do-	No.
		10	57c.H.28.a.5.0.	No.	UNKNOWN SOLDIER, Dorsets.	Numerals.	No.
					(signed) M. BARKLEY, Lieut.		

This form to be made out in triplicate, two copies being handed to the D.A.D. (C. of G.) and the other retained by the Burial Officer.

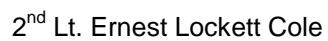
814 W. 2125 H.P. 2348. 250/0009. 979. S.O.P. 101.

ATTACHMENT #3

Lloyd Reeds Map Collection of McMaster University, Hamilton Ontario Canada. Bapaume Map
389WW1MAP <http://digitalarchive.mcmaster.ca/islandora/object/macrepo%3A4201/-/collection>



The National Archives British Trench Map Atlas.57d Le Sars Edition 2F Map wo297_1505 Trenches
Corrected 24/09/1916. Naval and Military Press, Uckfield, West Sussex, United Kingdom.



ATTACHMENT #5

Commonwealth War Graves Commission. *Casualty Record: Commonwealth Forces.*

<http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead.aspx?cpage=1>

surname	forename	death	unit	memorial
CLOSE	WILLIAM COLLINS	20-03-17	3rd Bn. attd. 6th Bn.	ARRAS MEMORIAL
BELDING	CLARE	11-03-15	1st Bn. attd. 2nd Bn.	LE TOURET MEMORIAL
LEES	PERCY BERESFORD	11-03-15	3rd Bn. attd. 2nd Bn.	LE TOURET MEMORIAL
MATTHEWS	EDWARD ALEXANDER	10-03-15	3rd Bn. attd. 2nd Bn.	LE TOURET MEMORIAL
NELLES	NORMAN CUMMINGS	29-01-15	1st Bn.	LE TOURET MEMORIAL
THOMPSON	HAROLD	09-05-15	3rd Bn. attd. 1st Bn.	LE TOURET MEMORIAL
TYRRELL	JOSEPH LIONEL ALLANSON	02-03-16	"A" Coy. 8th Bn. attd. 5th Bn.	LOOS MEMORIAL
HALL	WILLIAM HINGSTON	05-04-18	6th Bn.	POZIERES MEMORIAL
THOMAS	ARTHUR LEWIS	24-04-18	3rd Bn. attd. 2nd Bn.	POZIERES MEMORIAL
BOSTOCK	ERIC NORMAN	27-05-18	2nd Bn.	SOISSONS MEMORIAL
HALL	ROBERT LANE	27-05-18	2nd Bn.	SOISSONS MEMORIAL
ALMACK	ALFRED CHRISTOPHER TURNOUR	27-09-16	3rd Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
BEALE	NORMAN STUART CHARLES	18-08-16	7th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
COLE	ERNEST LOCKETT	27-09-16	8th Bn. attd. 1st Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
COOPER	GEORGE SPENCER	17-02-17	6th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
FARRELL	REGINALD	14-07-16	6th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
FARRIMOND	JOSEPH	21-07-16	8th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
HAMILTON	NOEL CRAWFORD	14-07-16	6th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
HAYWARD	HERBERT WILLIAM	26-09-16	8th Bn. attd. 6th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
HIGHAM	PERCY HARROWELL	17-02-17	6th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
JARVIS	FREDERICK CHARLES	07-07-16	2nd Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
LEA	MAURICE BERTRAM	18-08-16	7th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
LIDINGTON	NORMAN HERBERT	15-09-16	1st. Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
LLOYD	HERBERT	18-08-16	7th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
LYS	FRANCIS GEORGE BRYAN	14-07-16	6th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
PAGE	ALFRED CECIL DUDLEY	18-08-16	7th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
SCALES	PATRICK JOSEPH	17-02-17	6th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
WOULFE	GERALD LASCELLES	14-07-16	6th Bn.	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL
BALLARD	FRANK WATSON	11-10-18	3rd Bn. attd. 1st Bn.	VIS-EN-ARTOIS MEMORIAL
BOAL	WILLIAM WAINHOUSE	10-10-18	7th Bn.	VIS-EN-ARTOIS MEMORIAL

ATTACHMENT #6

War Diary of the 1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment, September 1916. [Ancestry.ca Link](https://www.ancestry.ca/link).

5/ September 1916.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

WAR DIARY

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.
(Erase heading not required.) 1st Northamptonshire Reg^t

Army Form C. 2118.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BRESLE	19 th		Batt ⁿ paraded 1 P.M. - Starting Point HEVENECOURT - 2 P.M. Marched via MILLENCOURT to and ALBERT, & BECOURT and LOZENGE WOOD to MAMETZ WOOD, arriving 7 P.M. Ground wet; dug out shelters water-logged. Troops make bivouacs with waterproof sheets. Showery morning. At 1 P.M. order rec ^d to vacate present bivouacs by 4 P.M. and move back to ALBERT to billet. Coy move at intervals, commencing 3 P.M. order at B.C.D. Transport very much blocked both getting up to and coming down from BOTTOM Wood. Roads deep in mud and very congested. Loads stuck & blocking road. Transport arrives 1-30 A.M. Last day cleaning up arms, kits and billets. Batt ⁿ for C & D Coy in morning for A & B in afternoon.	J.P. Tollenache Major
ALBERT	21 st		2 Coy E.V. MICE and P.A. HEATHER and 60. OR join from Base. C.D. inspects Coy in Drill Order. at 3 P.M. Batt ⁿ parades for presentation of medal ribbons by Brig ^{ade} . Temp ^{orary} Capt. J. CLARK receives the Military Cross. Serg ^{ant} HURST the D.C.M. Eight others the Military Medal. Quiet day in billets.	
"	23 rd		Lt. A. THORWELLY and 2 Lt. G.C. TOTTOM join from Base.	
"	24 th		Coy commence to move up (D.C.B.A.) to reserve Trenches, CHESTER. 8 th & MILL ST ^{ation} arriving 9-30 to 10 P.M. Batt ⁿ H.Q. in CHESTER. ST ^{ation} . L.N. Lanes out 2/60 th in front line - B ^{attle} Success in assault.	
"	25 th		All available men digging out DROP, STARFISH and CDK alleys. 4 th Coy digging new C ^{ommunications} Trench.	
Pos. Position	26 th		H.B. 2/12 th A. ST ^{ation} A. COLDWELL joined from Base, 25 th unit.	
S of HIGH WOOD			T2134. Wt. W708-776. 500000. 416. Sst. J. C. & S.	

ATTACHMENT #6 (cont'd)

War Diary of the 1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment, September 1916. [Ancestry.ca Link](https://www.ancestry.ca/link).

Army Form C. 2118.

WAR DIARY

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.
(Erase heading not required.)

1st Northamptonshire Regt

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs. Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
S. of High Wood	27 th		B and C Coy move up to FLERS Line and are placed at disposal of D.C. 2/K.R.R. C Coy attached across the open between D.C. 1 & 2 with a view to taking a further portion of D.C. 1. While the 2/K.R.R. assisted by bombers of our C. Coy made a bombing attack up D.C. 1 & 2. There was no effective artillery preparation; the German trenches were strongly defended; the attack was unsuccessful. 2/Lt E. COLE killed, 2/Lt R. W. GATES wounded, about 30 D.R. killed and wounded. Major TOLLENTINE moved up to 2/K.R.R. H.Q. to take charge of the 2 Coy at disposal of D.C. 2/K.R.R. D Coy placed at disposal of D.C. 2/B. Sussex Regt. A Coy employed carrying up bombs etc. Efforts were made to gain ground up D.C. 1 by bombing; some ground was gained, but the trench junction connecting D.C. 1 with the new trench taken by the L.M. Lines was not reached. About 5 P.M. a Zeppelin was sighted E. of our position. Between 6.30 P.M. and 8.30 P.M. Batt concentrated at BAZENTIN and was relieved by 18 th LONDON. in reserve position. Moved to billets in ALBERT. Batt paraded, and marches to billets at MILLENCOURT. 2/Lt T.C. BLANDFORD joined from leave. Quiet day in billets. nothing to report.	
ALBERT	29 th	2 P.M.		
"	30 th			

T2134. Wt. W708-776. 500000. 4/15. Sh. J. C. & S.

ATTACHMENT #7

War Diary of the 2nd Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps, September 1916. [Ancestry.ca Link](https://www.ancestry.ca/link).

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY (Erase heading not required.)		Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Place	Date	Hour	
	25 th		In the afternoon the Batt ^y marched via LOZENGE and MANETZ Woods to the newly Taken Trench F of ENAUCOURT L'ABBAYE which formed part of the old German FLEERS LINE. During the 1 st Batt ^y the Black Watch. As the way up the fort. 2-3 rd issued orders that a bombing attack was to be made with the object of taking west of the German part of the FLEERS LINE. The attack was delivered that night, and was successful about 130 yards of Trench being taken. deeply by the battery and 5 th Division of No 8. (Rhodesian) platoon. Five prisoners were taken. In the following day a further attack was made. but without result. at 2.30 P.M. Again at 11 P.M. we attacked and drove in the Germans for some 40 yards after severe fighting. Most British were wounded. The German was wounded slightly. No more bombing attacks were made without result. The German was severely wounded and Capt L ^t Ballance killed.
	26		No more attacks were made as nearly all our bombs were out of action and it was evident that the enemy was very strong. That night the 1 st & 2 nd Batts Regt. 47 th Division moved on. The 4 th Battalion were 10 p.m. killed 3 wounded.
	27		47 th killed 21 wounded 80. missing 8.
	28		The Batt ^y marched from the Trenches to BLACK WOOD. Many of the men being so tired that they could hardly march it. Some indeed did not stop till mid. day.
	29 th		At 3 P.M. the Batt ^y marched to NEW COURT in MICELENCOURT. Were spent working at MICELENCOURT under canvas. 2 nd Battalion showed duty on the 30 th and 31 st .

ATTACHMENT #8

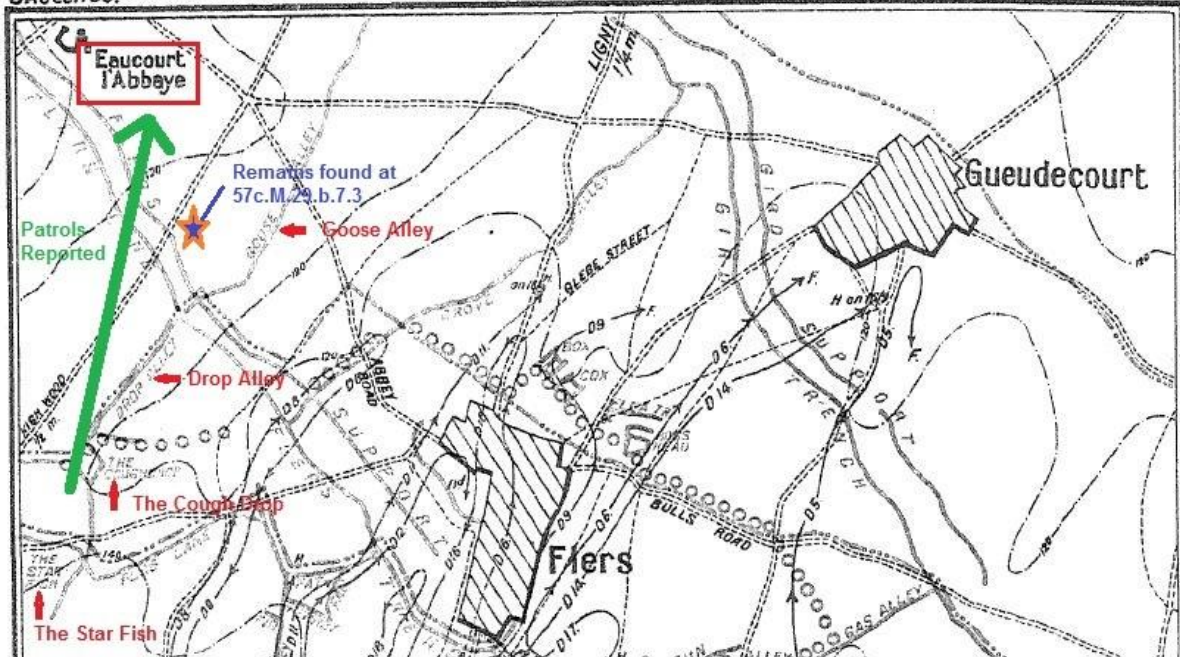
War Diary Historical Information: Page 352

1. [History of the Great War: Military Operations \(Text\)](#)
2. [History of the Great War: Military Operations \(Maps and Appendices\)](#)

Little was accomplished on the front of the III. Corps. In the 47th Division the 1/23rd London (Br.-General F. G. Lewis's 142nd Brigade) advanced from Crest Trench thirty minutes before zero hour, its left directed upon the Cough Drop 1,300 yards away: arrived here, the line was to pivot on its left, pressing forward to consolidate the spur behind Prue Trench, west of the Cough Drop, whilst patrols pushed into Eaucourt l'Abbaye. Beyond the Switch Line the companies were heavily shelled and machine-gunned, became scattered, and could do little more than occupy the knot of trenches called "The Starfish". One company, however, reinforced the remnants of the 1/6th London in the Cough Drop.²

THE TANKS AT FLERS 15th Sept., 1916.

Sketch 36.



ATTACHMENT #9

This “*Reporting and Review*” attachment is provided to assist all parties in the submission of an investigative report related to the identification of the burial location, or headstone markings, of a member of the Commonwealth Forces during the Great War 1914-1921. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) receives a copy of this report in the event they wish to make changes to the commemoration details. In order to alter the records, the CWGC has set out their criteria for the procedure and submission of cases for review, as detailed below. The CWGC is under no obligation to make changes based on a report.

This process differs from cases related to members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) as these do not go first to the CWGC Canadian Agency in Ottawa. We have modified the requirement information noted below to include CWGC criteria from their source material:

Guideline Criteria for Submission:	Evidence and Source Material:
Cases need to present clear and convincing evidence to prove the identity of a casualty and must not be based on assumption or speculation. The Commission's Commemoration Team will also consider whether the findings of a better informed contemporary investigation are being revisited and if there is any new evidence to consider. By way of example, it is unlikely that the Commission would support a revision of the arrangements for the commemoration where it is apparent that no new evidence is being presented and, a better informed previous decision is being revisited some 100 years later.	Un-cited resources cannot be accepted as official evidence. Research conducted on the internet will only be accepted if supplied by a recognised authority such as the CWGC, National Archives etc. Any primary (contemporary) sources <i>e.g. the National Archives, CWGC, and Genealogical website original documentation etc.</i> must be copied and submitted with the case. The relevant pages of any secondary material <i>e.g. published reference books and articles; website material etc.</i> should also be copied and submitted. All sources must be correctly referenced as footnotes throughout the submission as well as cited in a complete bibliography of consulted sources. Referencing is essential to any historical research and should contain some uniform elements.

The following have participated in the preparation, review and submission of this report on a voluntary basis. Those noted below have read the investigative report and compared it to the criteria set out by the CWGC, as a guiding principle, and have agreed to have their name included as part of the review team. The CWGC may contact any of the reviewers at the e-mail address provided below.

Name	Affiliation	E-mail	Contribution
Richard Laughton Canada	Private Researcher LMC Great War Research Company	rlaughton@laughton.ca	Investigator & Report Author
Timothy McTague	Private Researcher Rhode Island USA	timmct@verizon.net	Report Reviewer